

Claims

1. A token receiving and article dispensing apparatus that dispenses an article upon the receipt of a token, comprising:

5 a) a token inlet, an article outlet, and an article rest upon which the article rests immediately prior to being dispensed; and

 b) wherein the token inlet confronts the article rest such that, when a token is inserted into the token inlet,
10 the token pushes the article off the article rest such that the article falls into and through said article outlet.

2. The token receiving and article dispensing apparatus of claim 1, wherein the article rest comprises a token slot,
15 wherein the token inlet and token slot are in communication with each other such that said token is in at the same time the token inlet and the token slot of the article rest.

3. The token receiving and article dispensing apparatus
20 of claim 1, wherein the article rest comprises a token slot, wherein the token inlet and token slot are in communication with each other such that said token can be pushed transversely of the article rest and can thereby be pushed transversely against an article on the article rest to in
25 turn push said article off said article rest.

4. The token receiving and article dispensing apparatus of claim 1, and further comprising an article feed, with the article feed being elongate to receive a plurality of
30 articles, with the article feed having an inclined portion relative to said article rest to feed by gravity articles toward said article rest.

5. The token receiving and article dispensing apparatus of claim 1, and further comprising a token storage for used tokens, wherein said token storage is disposed below said article rest and above said article outlet.

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6. The token receiving and article dispensing apparatus of claim 5, wherein the token storage comprises a movable floor, such that, upon being moved, said token storage is in communication with the article outlet such that said used
10 tokens fall out of the token storage and into and through the article outlet.

7. The token receiving and article dispensing apparatus of claim 1, and further comprising a general storage, with
15 said general storage being of sufficient size to hold a plurality of tokens and a plurality of articles.

8. The token receiving and article dispensing apparatus of claim 1 and further comprising said article, with said
20 article comprising an openable container having an object therein.

9. The token receiving and article dispensing apparatus of claim 1 and further comprising said token, with said
25 token having a visual indication associated with a portion of said apparatus adjacent one slot.

10. The token receiving and article dispensing apparatus of claim 1 and further comprising said token and
30 said article, with said token and said article having a visual indication associated with each other and further associated with a portion of said apparatus adjacent one slot.

11. The token receiving and article dispensing apparatus of claim 1, wherein said apparatus comprises a housing that comprises a form of a treasure chest.

5 12. The token receiving and article dispensing apparatus of claim 1, wherein said apparatus comprises a housing that comprises a floor, four sidewalls extending upwardly and outwardly from the floor, and a lid on the four sidewalls.

10 13. The token receiving and article dispensing apparatus of claim 1, wherein said apparatus comprises a housing that comprises a floor, four sidewalls extending upwardly from the floor, and a lid on the four sidewalls,
15 wherein the lid comprises an upper undulating surface.

14. A token receiving and article dispensing apparatus that dispenses an article upon the receipt of a token, comprising:

5 a) an article dispenser for receiving an article to be dispensed;

b) a token inlet; and

10 c) a common outlet, wherein said common outlet is shared by articles that are dispensed and tokens that are used, such that an article is dispensed from said common outlet and from said apparatus upon inserting a token into said token inlet, and such that said token, after having been inserted into said token inlet, is also dispensable from said common outlet and from said apparatus such that
15 tokens of one unique visual indication may be kept separate from tokens of another unique visual indication.

15. A token receiving and article dispensing apparatus that dispenses an article upon the receipt of a token, comprising:

- 5 a) an article feed for feeding articles, with the article feed having an upper portion and a lower portion;
- b) an article dispenser, with the article dispenser being disposed generally below said lower portion of the article feed;
- 10 c) an article outlet, with the article outlet being disposed generally below each of the article dispenser and the token storage;
- d) a token inlet into which a token can be inserted; and
- 15 e) a token storage, with the token storage being disposed generally below the token inlet and above the article outlet;
- f) such that articles run automatically via gravity from the article feed to the article dispenser to the article outlet and out of the apparatus; and
- 20 g) such that tokens run automatically via gravity from the token inlet to the token storage to the article outlet and out of the apparatus.

16. A token receiving and article dispensing apparatus that dispenses an article upon the receipt of a token, comprising:

5 a) a first path along which articles are fed and dispensed; and

b) a second path along which tokens are fed and dispensed, with the paths directly intersecting at least once.

10 17. The token receiving and article dispensing apparatus of claim 16, wherein said first and second paths directly intersect at least twice.

18. A token receiving and article dispensing apparatus that dispenses an article upon the receipt of a token, comprising:

5 a) a housing that comprises a token inlet and an article outlet;

b) a dispenser in the housing that dispenses said article in response to said token being inserted into the token inlet; and

10 c) with the housing having at least one of a shape and graphics of a treasure chest.

19. A teaching and reinforcing method for teaching and reinforcing positive behavior with a teaching apparatus, comprising the steps of:

5 a) having a first person recognize positive behavior of a second person;

b) having the first person give a first thing to the second person;

c) having the second person put the first thing into a second thing; and

10 d) having the second thing automatically output a third thing in response to said input of the first thing.

20. A teaching and reinforcing method for teaching and reinforcing positive behavior with a teaching apparatus, wherein the teaching apparatus automatically returns a reward upon deposit of a token into the teaching apparatus, with the teaching and reinforcing method comprising the steps of:

having a first person notice positive behavior by a second person and then having the first person give the second person a token to reward said positive behavior; and having the second person deposit said token into said teaching apparatus such that the teaching apparatus automatically returns a reward.

21. A teaching and reinforcing method for teaching and reinforcing positive behavior with a teaching apparatus, wherein the teaching apparatus comprises a) a first path along which articles are fed and dispensed; and b) a second path along which tokens are fed and dispensed, with the paths directly intersecting at least once, with the teaching and reinforcing method comprising the steps of:

selecting a reward article and feeding the reward article into said first path;

10 selecting a token associated with the second path;
making said token available to at least a first person;

having the first person notice positive behavior of a second person and then having the first person give to the second person said token; and then

15 having the second person feed said token into said second path such that said reward article is dispensed by the teaching apparatus.